

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 16510 ACTION SECSTATE INFO

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QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 16510

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS

SUBJ: GOE CONCERN ABOUT ISRAELI INTENTIONS

1. FAHMY ASKED ME TO CALL TODAY. IT WAS MY FIRST MEETING WITH HIM SINCE HIS RETURN FROM HIS SWING THROUGH THE GULF, IRAN AND SYRIA. PURPOSE OF HIS SUMMONS WAS TO EXPRESS GOE (AND SAUDI) CONCERN OVER ISRAELI INTENTIONS TOWARD SOUTH LEBANON.

2. FAHMY FIRST TOLD ME ASAD HAD BRIEFED VP MUBARAK AND HIM ON RECENT US-SYRIAN EXCHANGES. ASAD, FAHMY NOTED POINTEDLY, HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THAT SENT TO SADAT. THE SYRAIANS, FAHMY CONTINUED, HAVE
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NO INTENTION OF BEING DRAGGED INTO A CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL -

AT LEAST NOT FOR THE TIME BEING. THE PALESTINIANS CANNOT DRAG THE SYRIANS INTO SUCH A CONFLICT, UNLESS OF COURSE THE ISRAELIS ATTACK IN THE GOLAN OR BOMB DAMASCUS. THE PALESTINIANS ARE SEEKING TO SPREAD RUMORS THAT THE ISRAELIS INTEND TO ATTACK SOUTH LEBANON. THEY ARE DOING SO TO FRIGHTEN OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW, AS FAHMY ANALYZED IT, THERE SHOULD BE NO INTEREST IN PRECIPITATING HOSTILITIES WITH SYRIA ANYWHERE. THE SYRIANS ARE DOING THE ISRAELIS JOB FOR THEM WITH RESPECT TO THE PALESTINIANS.

3. FAHMY OPINED, HOWEVER, THAT AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE THE ISRAELIS MAY BECOME SO CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEVELOPING US-ARAB RELATIONSHIP THAT THEY WILL CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO TAKE ACTION TO DAMAGE IT. HE RECALLED THE LAVON AFFAIR. THE ISRAELIS, IN FAHMY'S VIEW, MIGHT UNDERTAKE SOMETHING "FOOLISH TO BLACKEN THE AMERICAN IMAGE IN THE ARAB WORLD." THEY MAY MAKE IT APPEAR THAT THERE HAS BEEN US-SAUDI-EGYPTIAN-KUWAITI-SYRIAN COLLUSION IN THE CAIRO SUMMIT DECISIONS. HE THOUGH WE SHOULD BE ON GUARD AGAINST THIS POSSIBILITY.

4. FAHMY PROFESSED NOT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE ISRAELIS ARE REINFORCING THEIR NORTHERN BORDER AREA. THE SAUDIS ARE CONVINCED THAT THERE IS AN ISRAELI INTENTION TO ATTACK LEBANON AND THAT ANY SUCH ACTION WILL BE AIMED, INDIRECTLY, AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA AND ITS ROLE. KING KHALID HAD TOLD HIM SO. THE BORDER AREAS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON, FAHMY CONTENTED, ARE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA HEADED BY CLOVIS FRANCES. IN ADDITION THERE ARE 500 FORMER LEBANESE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS IN THE AREA HEADED BY HANNA SAID'S BROTHER. MOREOVER, SYRIA HAS TAKEN CONTINGENCIES IN TYRE AND NABATIYA. THESE FORCES SHOULD BE ADEQUATE TO STOP THE PALESTINIANS FROM CARRYING OUT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AGAINST ISRAEL. THE NAHARIYA ROCKET ATTACK WAS AN ISOLATED INCIDENT AND WILL NOT RECUR.

5. FAHMY CONCLUDED BY ASKING THAT WE IMPRESS UPON THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ATTACK SOUTHERN LEBANON. I TOLD FAHMY WE HAVE ALREADY URGED RESTRAINT ON THE ISRAELIS AS WELL AS THE SYRIANS. I SAW NO REASON WHY THE ISRAELIS WOULD ATTACK

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SOUTH LEBANON UNLESS IT AGAIN BECOMES A BASE FOR PLO ATTACKS ON ISRAELI VILLAGES. IN MY OPINION, THE BEST WAY TO KEEP THE SOUTH LEBANON/ISRAELI BORDER QUIET IS FOR THE ARABS TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO STOP THE PLO FROM MOUNTING ATTACKS ON ISRAEL FROM THAT REGION.

EILTS UNQTE ROBINSON

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